

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01
TRSE-00 EB-08 SIL-01 LAB-04 COME-00 SCA-01 DHA-02
ACDA-07 SNM-02 DEAE-00 HEW-04 AID-05 /093 W
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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2219
INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL PRIORITY
AMCONSUL QUEBEC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 0263

POUCHED ALL OTHER AMCONSUL CANADA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, CA
SUBJECT: NEW PARLIAMENTARY SITTING TO BEGIN JANUARY 24

REF: 76 OTTAWA 4949

1. SUMMARY. NEW COMMONS SITTING WILL BEGIN JANUARY 24 AND NOT LIKELY END BEFORE LATE JULY. FOLLOWING ARE MAJOR ITEMS OF LEGISLATION OR DEBATE WHICH COULD SPARK CONTROVERSY: REMOVAL OF PRICE/WAGE CONTROLS; IMMIGRATION BILL; JAMES BAY SETTLEMENT; REGULATION OF DOMESTIC NUCLEAR INDUSTRY; GUN CONTROL; CONFLICT OF INTEREST OF MPS; REVISION OF BANK ACT; AND RADIO AND TV BROADCASTING OF HOUSE DEBATES. END SUMMARY.

2. SCHEDULE: NEW HOUSE OF COMMONS SITTING WILL BEGIN JANUARY 24, RISE FOR TEN DAYS OVER EASTER, AND AIM FOR SUMMER RECESS JUNE 30, ACCORDING TO JERRY YANOVER, PARLIAMENTARY ASSISTANT TO HOUSE LEADER ALLAN MACEACHEN. YANOVER SAID THAT JUNE 30 TARGET IS UNREALISTIC AND THAT SITTING IS MORE LIKELY TO GO TO END OF JULY. YANOVER
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GAVE EMBASSY OFFICER FOLLOWING RUNDOWN ON MAJOR ITEMS OF INTEREST DURING THIS COMMONS SITTING.

3. GENERAL. NEW BUDGET IS EXPECTED IN LATE MARCH OR EARLY APRIL, SOONER THAN USUAL. IF OPPOSITION PARTIES CONTINUE SLOW-DOWN TACTICS OF FALL SITTING, GOVERNMENT WILL SEEK PROCEDURAL CHANGES, INCLUDING EXTENSION OF

HOURS OF SITTING. EFFORTS BY NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP) AND PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES (PC) TO ENGAGE GOVERNMENT IN REVIEW OF WAGE/PRICE CONTROLS PROGRAM WILL BE SHUT OFF AFTER TWO DAYS OF DEBATE.

4. PENDING LEGISLATION. MAJOR PENDING BILLS GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO PUSH ARE: JAMES BAY SETTLEMENT; IMMIGRATION; HUMAN RIGHTS; REORGANIZATION OF AUDITOR GENERAL'S OFFICE; AND REORGANIZATION OF DEPARTMENT OF MANPOWER AND IMMIGRATION, WHICH WILL BECOME DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION.

5. NEW LEGISLATION. GOVERNMENT WILL INTRODUCE AND PUSH THROUGH RESOLUTION TO ALLOW RADIO AND TV BROADCAST OF COMMONS DEBATE. FULL IMPLEMENTATION IS NOT LIKELY BEFORE END OF 1977 BECAUSE OF TIME NEEDED FOR EQUIPMENT INSTALLATION. BEFORE PRESENT LEGISLATION EXPIRES MARCH 31, GOVERNMENT WILL INTRODUCE NEW FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ACT WHICH WILL CODIFY FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS HAMMERED OUT AT DECEMBER 13-14 FIRST MINISTERS CONFERENCE (REFTEL). BANK ACT EXPIRES JUNE 30, AND NEW LEGISLATION WILL BE NECESSARY BEFORE THEN. THERE MAY BE BILL INTRODUCED ON MP CONFLICT OF INTEREST, A TOPIC RAISED PERIODICALLY OVER PAST TWO YEARS. GOVERNMENT MAY ALSO INTRODUCE NUCLEAR CONTROL AND ADMINISTRATION BILL TO REGULATE DOMESTIC NUCLEAR INDUSTRY, AND BROADCASTING ACT MAY RECEIVE MAJOR OVERHAUL. SO-CALLED "PEACE AND SECURITY" LEGISLATION, MOST CONTROVERSIAL ASPECT OF WHICH IS GUN CONTROL REGULATION, COULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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INTRODUCED IN LATE FEBRUARY OR EARLY MARCH. ANOTHER CONTROVERSIAL BILL IS S-19 BEFORE SENATE WHICH WOULD REMOVE MARIJUANA FROM NARCOTICS CONTROL ACT AND PLACE

IT UNDER PROVISION OF FOOD AND DRUG ACT.

6. OTHER MATTERS. THERE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE OTHER CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS WHICH THE OPPOSITION WILL RAISE ON SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT DURING QUESTION PERIODS OR DEBATE TO EMBARRASS THE GOVERNMENT. ONE SUCH TOPIC MAY BE OPERATIONS OF CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CIDA), WHOSE PROGRAMS AND PROCEDURES HAVE RECENTLY BEEN CRITICIZED BY AN NDP AND A PC MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT. IVAN HEAD, TRUDEAU'S FOREIGN POLICY ADVISER, EXPRESSED CONCERN TO AN EMBASSY OFFICER ABOUT THESE ATTACKS, NOT BECAUSE OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST CIDA, BUT BECAUSE THE CRITICISM MAY REFLECT A GROWING PUBLIC DISENCHANTMENT WITH THE SCOPE OF CANADA'S FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

7. COMMENT. HOUSE WAS SHARPLY CRITICIZED BY MEDIA FOR ITS GENERALLY UNPRODUCTIVE FALL SITTING, DURING WHICH ONLY THREE BILLS WERE ENACTED. WE BELIEVE GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE STRONG EFFORT TO MOVE LEGISLATION MORE RAPIDLY THROUGH THIS HOUSE SITTING, BUT NONE OF MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IS LIKELY TO ATTRACT WIDE POPULAR ATTENTION, EXCEPT PERHAPS WAGE/PRICE CONTROLS, GUN CONTROL, REVISION OF BANK ACT, AND NEW BUDGET. WE SHALL BE REPORTING IN DETAIL ON LEGISLATIVE ITEMS AS THEY COME UP FOR DEBATE.
ENDERS

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